



W. BELSHAM DEFENDING HIMSELF

A VOYAGE

OF

WILLIAM BELSHAW,

(A NATIVE OF LIVERPOOL,)

UP THE MEDITERRANEAN,

Published in 1839.



Giving an account of the Captain's cruelty to the crew—The death of one of the ship's company by severe treatment—Alarm in the dead of the night by an Algerine pirate—Accident by Lightning—His dreadful sufferings abroad, with his miraculous escape from a Wolf, and particulars of near losing his life, when ashore, by an attempt of one of the Arabs of Egypt. Also, a sketch of Milford-haven, Leghorn, Genoa, Alexandria, Pompey's Pillar, and Gibraltar—Returns home after an absence of six years, and now publishes this Book, the sale of which, he trusts, will enable him to raise a small sum, being from a long affliction of dropsy, and an injury of the spine, totally unable for sea-service.

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A VOYAGE OF WILLIAM BELSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

I was born in the year 1802, on the 27th day of May, of honest and industrious parents. About the age of eleven years, I engaged myself on board a vessel upon trial as an apprentice. We put to sea, but our ship springing a dangerous leak, we were obliged to put back to Liverpool, the port from which we started, where we got a thorough repair. My parents were soon aware of my disposition, and though my mother objected to my following such a dangerous life, yet my father seemed determined I should go; and though the brig was only destined for Dublin, he believed this short trip would give me enough of the disasters of a seafaring life. Indeed I was not anxious to venture again in this vessel, she was so old and creaky, and as a new ship was then about to sail to the West Indies, I was determined to run away from the former, and join the latter. I did so, but fearing to return for my parents, I absented myself from home for two days; at the end of which, hunger compelled me to return, and gladly my poor mother received me with open arms, as she had just heard that the ship was lost, and all hands on board had perished.

Both my father and mother thought from the dangers I had encountered that I should think no more of going to sea—still I was determined. My mother, kind-hearted soul, persuaded me to go to some trade. I was first put to a watchmaker, and successively to a shoemaker and a trunk maker. Her care of me was in vain, for to sea I would go; and as she found it would be in vain to stop me, interceded with a captain who was boarding at my aunt's, and bound me to him for five years; thinking as he was paying his addresses to my aunt's daughter, he won't treat me more kindly. The vessel was a f

brig bound for Leghorn, and I soon found out to my sorrow that the captain was a sharp and very austere man. In 1817 we set sail, and after being two days out, a violent storm arose which lasted for several days; during this time my thoughts recurred to the comfortable home I had left, my heart grew sad at the danger that threatened us, and the vessel being new and every part of her working very stiff, most of the men's hands got so very sore, that the captain, mate, and one man, were the only men able to work her. Owing to the contrary winds and very bad weather, we were obliged to run into the port of Milford Haven, in South Wales, and here I saw the principle and disposition of our cruel captain.

As it pleased God, the cook was taken ill of a fever and ague, and not able to perform his duties. When the captain was informed of it, he went to him, and began cursing and calling him a 'lazy lubber;' he the captain went down below, put a rope round the sick man's neck, and lugged him out of his hammock; the poor fellow managed to crawl upon deck and rest himself against the coppers, when his unfeeling master got a rope two inches and a quarter thick, and struck him with it several times; after which he proceeded, with the assistance of the first and second mate, to strip him of his clothes; and the first mate, who was as great a tyrant as his master, threw several buckets of salt water over him, while the second mate scrubbed him with a hard brush. Though commanded to assist in performing this hardened cruelty, the men refused to have any hand in the affair, and retired below to consult how they could get away from such a commander, and while doing so, a boat came alongside of our ship, in which were four men and a gentleman, the latter demanding to know if there was a man going to be murdered on board. The captain replied no—that his black b——r of a cook was pretending to be ill, but that he would soon cure him! The gentleman on such a base reply, immediately cried shame, and told the cook to keep up

his spirits, and he would shortly see justice done him. He then ordered the boat to be rowed ashore, during which the three cruel tyrants laid the cook across the windlass, and there ill used him as before, swearing and using the most abusive language. Soon after this the captain came below where I was at work, washed his hands, after giving me two or three violent kicks, then ordered the boat to be got ready that he might go on shore to satisfy the authorities.—Scarcely was the boat got ready, when the same boat which came alongside before, was near close upon us, with six men in her; they were speedily on board, and having showed their warrants, told the captain he must come with them; he swore he would not quit his vessel and leave her in the hands of common seamen. One of the constables made a reply, saying it must be left to the black man, meaning the cook, whether he wished them to be taken or not; the latter was asked, who granted leave for the first mate to remain, and the captain and second mate to be secured. Accordingly after much parley, the captain, cook, and second mate, were taken into the boat, to appear before the magistrates, but the result of the enquiry I was not in possession of, only that the captain was compelled to pay sixty pounds for the support of the cook and for a doctor.

After lying about a fortnight in the river, one morning early we received orders from the captain to get under way, but to our surprise the same boat and two constables came for the first and second mate to go again before the magistrates, who ordered them to pay fifty pounds each before they could be set at liberty, as the black man was very ill: the first mate replied that he would see the cook d——d before he would give him any thing. On the magistrates hearing this impertinent language, they committed them to Pembroke castle to take their trials. The captain used all the means he could to get them released, but in vain, and he was forced to ship another mate and two seamen.

The reader may suppose the consternation I was

in, on seeing such cruelty practised on board the ship by the master, and heartily did I wish myself at home again with my affectionate parents. I was ruminating on my hard fate one day, when a thought came into my head that I would try to make my escape, by stealing the boat in the night. That very night it being my watch upon deck, when all hands were asleep on board, I stole into the fore-castle, packed up part of my apparel in a bag, went aft on the poop, hauled the boat under the stern, and threw my bag into it. I then endeavoured to haul the boat alongside, close to the gangway, the wind being so rough, and the tide running a strong current, caused it to bound so violently against the side of the ship, that the noise awoke the chief mate, who coming upon deck enquired what was the matter? I made an excuse, by saying, 'I was giving the boat more penter.' He ordered me to make less noise, and then went below to his hammock. I began now to have but poor hopes of making my escape, went and sat down for about an hour, thinking the mate might go to sleep again. Supposing all was right, I tried to get the boat to the gangway on the other side of the vessel; after doing so, I put an oar in the boat, and finding it was fast in the main sheet, I was obliged to cut it away.

Just as I was preparing to make a start, the mate came on deck again, and demanded to know what I was doing? I then stammered and said, that 'I was making the boat more secure, and giving it more penter.' He then belaboured me most unmercifully, and swore he would give it me worse if he caught me again upon the poop that night; yet he was ignorant of my intentions.

I now saw the hopelessness of my case, went below in the fore-castle, awoke one of the men, and told him the trouble I was in. This man told the mate, and on the captain returning the following morning, I was summoned into his presence. The captain finding I had hid myself, came on deck with

a rope's end in his hand, stamping and roaring like a bull, and ordered an immediate search to be made; this was immediately commenced by all hands, but in vain. Upon this the captain observed, 'I hope that the b——r has not fallen overboard: more likely, said one of the crew, you have frightened him so that he has jumped overboard himself. I hope not said the captain, as I've had bother enough with that black nasty nigger of a cook, and I don't know how I shall be able to get out of that scrape.' So you perceive, kind reader, how conscience troubled his guilty mind, and so it will be with all those who rule tyrannically.

The night came on, and I still kept in my hiding place. At length the new cook came below for coals; I called him by name, he started back, thinking, like the rest of the ship's company, that I had thrown myself overboard. I begged him to make intercession with the captain for me, as I was afraid he would murder me: he then went to the captain and told him I was living, and the latter smiled to hear it, promising if I returned to my duty he would forgive me; he returned, acquainting me of what the captain said, and persuaded me to come on deck. On coming upon deck and hearing the cabin bell ring, I went and answered it; and when I came before the captain he stamped and swore and gave me a violent kick, and ordered me to light a candle; after I had done so, I fell upon my knees and begged for mercy, and said I would do every thing in my power to please him: he cursed, and ordered me upon deck.

Some short time after, our ship's owner, (Mr. Taylor of Liverpool) came, and having heard all the particulars, he asked me the reason of my attempting to run away; I gave him little satisfaction, but told him I wished myself at home again. Mr. Taylor got the first and second mate their liberty by paying twenty pounds each for them. I was sorry to see them come on board any more, as I thought they richly deserved to suffer the punishment of the

law. But money will do great things in this world, yet they will have to answer for it in the next, without they repent; but I will leave that to them, and hope they will repent of their sins before they leave this world. I will acquaint my reader what became of the cook in another part of my pamphlet.

We now set sail with a favourable wind bound for Leghorn. We had not been long at sea before I found that the captain had not forgiven me; for one day as it was blowing a sharp breeze, when the cook having hid a tea cup of fat under the coppers, it rolled from under and broke. The captain seeing this, he called me upon deck, and enquired how that came there; I told him the truth, saying that I did not know. Upon hearing this he went in a most dreadful passion, laid hold of my jacket with one hand and my trousers with the other, lifted me up and flung me with great violence against the side of the long-boat. I fell on one of the ring-bolts, and cut my ankle dreadfully, which has left a mark for life; he then kicked and flogged me with a rope's end till I could scarcely walk. After the captain had left me I was assisted by one of the men to go below in the fore-castle, where I remained for about eight or nine days; I was obliged to crawl up and down on my hands and knees, as I had nothing to apply to my ankle; it swelled much, and the wound became dreadful and corrupted, discharging, with a most offensive smell. The cook advised me to wash it with warm salt beef brine, which I found to be very painful, but thanks be to God, it soon gave me relief, as I got able to crawl upon deck at needful times. But one day as I was on deck, the captain seeing me for the first time, asked me how I was, and whether I was able to work, saying, if I could come upon deck I must be able to work, so come and see if you can make yourself useful; I followed him on my hands and knees. My trousers by this time was worn out, and my knees were very sore, but thanks be to God I at last got that I could walk on my feet again. I was then ordered to attend

on the cabin ; I did not like, for I could not bear the captain to look at me. For a few days things went on well, as I did not receive one blow, but not missing plenty of oaths and curses, which was his common practice. I hope God will forgive him, as I now do, though at that time I thought I could never have forgiven him, but now I do forgive all, in hopes that the Lord will forgive me my own sins.

The captain soon got tired of being quiet, for he ordered that the men in the fore-castle should have no light at night, saying that they must do without it, for he had not too much oil for the binacal lamp, let alone the fore-castle one ; so the men to please him did as well as they could without a light. The weather becoming stormy, and the cook knowing that the captain had a great quantity of candles in store, made free to secret two in the fore-castle, which he unfortunately missed : he instantly called to me, and asked if I knew any thing of them. Upon declaring my innocence, he knocked me down, and threatened what he would do if he found I had taken them. The first mate went forward to the fore-castle, and made a strict search and found them ; he asked the men concerning the candles, they all said they knew nothing about them. The captain hearing this he immediately grasped me by the hair of my head, and said you d——d rascal you are found out. I still declared my innocence. The cook, seeing the anger of the captain, immediately stepped forward and said, Sir, the boy is innocent, for I took the candles, as there are plenty of them in store, and I thought it was hard that the men must be confined in darkness such rough weather as it then was, and candles being so plentiful on board, but the other cowardly fellows sneaked away afraid of the captain's anger, instead of coming forward like men. After the captain had heard this, he called the first and second mates, and ordered them to seize him. They did as the captain ordered them, and dragged him to the cat head, stripped his trousers down and bound him with a rope ; then the captain flogged him on

the backside severely, as if he had only been a boy; and though only a boy myself, I wondered why the men would stand such treatment, and not turn against the captain and mate. But I must inform the reader that there was not a spirited man on board the vessel except one, and he was the second mate, but the captain had got him to do as he liked for the sake of a glass of grog.

Our captain was a stout young man, and very proud. He would walk along the deck as if he was some great monarch, so that every one was afraid of him. After he had satisfied himself in his cruelty to this poor man he had been flogging, I perceived him coming towards the cabin with the same piece of rope in his hands. As soon as he came up to me, he laid hold of me and threw me down on one of the seats, then flogged me in a most dreadful manner; he then went upon deck. I was in a most dreadful condition, and could scarcely rise. I thought if he returned and found me there, he might finish me, so I got to the companion ladder and sat me down, and was a long time before I could get over the flogging I had received. Indeed I never was without black flesh and wounds whilst I was on board that vessel.

When we were about two or three days sail of the gut of Gibraltar, our captain spied a large brig, on which he said to the chief mate he did not like the appearance of that vessel, as there were so many on board. The captain and mate consulted together, and ordered our men to put our vessel before the wind or nearly, so we soon got out of sight of her; the captain believed her to be an Algerine pirate.

About five or six hours after, which was about nine o'clock at night, we altered our course again, and to our surprise about one the next morning she made her appearance close under our stern before we perceived her, it being so dark; she then put about and steered the same course as ourselves till she came alongside, so near that we expected they would entangle themselves with us and board us.

The captain ordered the mate to call the men aft, and swore we must all fight if they offered to board us. The second mate said to the captain would it not be better to put our vessel again before the wind, as we would soon leave her astern. The captain replied no, no, and snatching up a speaking trumpet he hailed her, 'Brig a ho,' which they did not answer, but went a little a-head of us, hove to, and waited till we came up with her; our captain hailed her again, but received no answer. He then swore he would make them answer—ordered the second mate to load one of the guns, as he expected she was a pirate, and waiting till we came up, he hailed her again, but receiving no reply, ordered the first mate to fire, which was answered by loud cheers and hooting, and immediately they hoisted a lighted lantern at the peak, but sheered and pulled it down. The captain and mate, with a speaking trumpet each, demanded where she was bound for, and at the same time the crew all shouted as loud as possible, in order to deceive them as to our strength and numbers; luckily we did so, for she sheered off, not daring to attack us, although, had she done so, the captain had made up his mind to defend the vessel, though we had but few fire arms on board. At daylight we discovered her at a distance, and fortunately for us at the same time the Spanish coast, so that we were shortly in the gut of Gibraltar.

Even here the captain did not forget to exercise his cruelty. As one of the men was about half a minute behind the rest upon deck after being called, he ordered him to receive seventeen lashes, which the man carefully entered in a log book, (several of the men were keeping one) as he said to keep tally with the captain; for my own part I considered myself fortunate if I escaped with a few kicks and curses each day. After a fair wind we were close upon Leghorn, took a pilot on board and entered the Mole, where we were put upon quarantine for seven days. Here we discharged a part of our cargo, the rest being to be left at Genoa. But, sickened at

the treatment I had received, I determined to make my escape, so beckoning to a boatman who was in his boat close by, and unseen by any of the ship's crew, I threw my bundle which contained my clothes into the boat, and then got in myself. The man not understanding English, nor I the Italian language, I pointed towards the shore, and got hold of one of the oars, and began to pull very hard myself to let him know that I was in great haste to get to the shore. When got to the slip, as I had no money in my pocket to pay him for his trouble, I opened my bag and took out a good new linen shirt and gave it him, at the same time giving him to understand that I wanted some money for it; he gave me two poles, (which is worth about one shilling of our money) and about a noggin of rum, which I drank and then left him, and went on shore, not knowing where I was going.

My readers may think I was heartily glad to escape from such a cruel master, though it may be said with the bard,

“Better bear the ills we have,
Than fly to others we know not of.”

Yet, when any kind of sailors experience such treatment as I did from their captain, they will no doubt agree with me in thinking that it was better to run the risk of chance than serve like a slave, to be kicked and buffeted about like a dog, and that too by one of the same mould and fashion as yourself, one who ought to protect the unfortunate apprentice in danger, and who was in justice bound to treat him as a Christian, and instruct him in that duty which would make him a good seaman and a worthy member of society.

CHAPTER II.

Being left alone in a strange country, and having but the small pittance which the boatman paid me, be assured, kind friends, I was truly miserable, and well might I ponder on those I had left in happy England, and sigh for the comforts of my parents' fireside; but Providence orders all for the best, and is ever ready to make the back for the burthen. After rambling about the city, I sold part of my clothes for a small sum, and strolled into a street infested by lewd women of the town; here I was beset by them, knowing that I was a stranger, but I took no notice of them till one more impudent than the rest actually pushed me into a house, thrust me on a chair, and was going to pick my pocket, though she very generously offered me some wine. It happened, however, as she was in the act of completing her rognery, a loud rap was heard at the door, and watching the opportunity to see it opened, I immediately rushed out, followed by a herd of as debauched looking beings as are to be met with in Dawson-street, in Liverpool. Some of my readers in Liverpool may say—why this was nought but a spree! I wish every man joy of his spree, when locked up in one of these filthy hells, with as many myrmidons at his back, with their stilettoes, as would send half a dozen fellows to answer for themselves in another world.

Misfortunes never come alone, so says the adage. I had scarcely time to congratulate myself on my escape from the bad women, when I found myself in another scrape; for on going to a cook's shop to get some meat, I was accosted by a low character, who begged of me in broken English. Being glad to meet with one who could speak my own language, I asked him to eat, as well as to direct me to some English house. He soon devoured what was brought

him, and I accompanied him to look for my countrymen, but the ungrateful rascal, while we were walking arm in arm, contrived to put his hand in my pocket, and was in the act of rifling me of my money, when I struggled hard with him, but he being the strongest, threw me down and ran off. I immediately got up and ran after him, crying, stop thief! stop thief! but no one understanding me they did not attempt to stop him. On his turning sharp up a passage I lost him, and to my surprise found myself in the same street where I was attacked by the bad women.

I quickly left this part of the city, and rambled about until it was dark, without any money in my pockets, not knowing where I should lodge. Considering what I should do, I perceived a man crossing towards me whom I soon recognized to be one of the men who was helping to discharge our cargo. Speaking good English, he enquired what brought me there. I told him my misfortune; he had compassion on me, took me to his lodgings, and gave me a good supper and a bed. The next morning he asked me to go to work with him, and I consented; but, as my troubles were never to end, going with him to his work I unluckily missed him, and was not able to find his house again. Not knowing where to go, I strolled about until night, and at last took up a passage, and rested myself on the top of some stairs. I was disturbed about three o'clock in the morning, by a man who came out of the apartments adjoining, with a savage dog, which no sooner saw me than it seized me by the shoulder; I shouted out, and the dog loosed from me at his master's call; yet the man caught me by the collar, gave me a violent kick, and muttering to himself some foreign words, left me.

Left again a stranger, without money or friends, I roved about until I came to a large square, where I saw great numbers of people (among whom were four priests) going to mass. I joined the number, followed them into the chapel, kneeled down, and

both cried and prayed at the thought of my desolate condition. I stopped here about three hours, then rambled towards the shipping, where as good luck would have it I met with a man whom I knew; he asked me to go home with him, I did so. where I got plenty to eat and drink. He and his wife agreed that I should stop with them till I got another ship, and then to pay them for my board, to which I consented.

A few days after, as I was walking about my lodgings, I saw one of the English merchants who was an owner of our vessel. I attempted to run away from him, but he soon caught me. I soon found that he was a very kind-hearted man. On his asking me the reason of my running away from the vessel, I began to cry, and told him it was on account of the cruelty of the captain, and showed him where I was lodging. He gave me a dollar, and asked me to come to his lodgings; gave me directions to find him, telling me what time he would be in, as he had other business to do. I went and acquainted my landlady, and at the appointed time attended the merchant's lodgings, where I got a very good dinner; after which, he gave me a shirt, waistcoat, handkerchief, and a pair of boots and shoes, which made me very comfortable. He also agreed to pay for my board till the vessel returned from Genoa. I promised him that I would do all in my power to please the captain if he would talk to him in my behalf, as I wished to get to my mother's fireside once more.

After I had been three weeks and five days on shore, our vessel returned from Genoa. As soon as I heard of it my spirits sunk, and I was full of trouble at the thoughts of the captain and first mate's cruelty. The day that I should have gone on board I ran into the city, and it being a day of merriment, went along the streets watching the masquerades, when suddenly I perceived the captain looking out of a window, and when I saw him looking at me I was so terrified that I had not power to run away.

He quickly came into the street and collared me, cursed and swore, but to my surprise did not strike nor kick me. He then took me to a boatman that he knew, and strictly charged him not to let me run away, but to take me on board of his vessel. There I received a very unkind reception from the mate. I told him I would do all in my power to please him if he would forgive me, but he seemed to have no feeling. We discharged our bales. A few days after our captain was invited to supper with another captain on board an English schooner that was lying alongside of us. After supper the steward of the schooner came on board our vessel, called me upon deck, and said that the captain was swearing vengeance against me to their captain, telling me that he would tie me down to the ring bolts of the deck, and there let the sea wash over me, with other threats of his intended cruelty. Upon hearing this I burst into tears, and thanked him for coming to tell me; he had no time to say any more, as his cabin bell rang, and he had to go and answer it.

The next morning I got up early, took my big jacket, and flint and steel, with a little tobacco, got into a boat, and reached the shore once more, giving the boatman my flint, steel, and tinder box for payment. I now went to French town, part of the suburbs of the city, where I thought I should be undiscovered, sold my jacket, and after spending the day there I ventured into the city.

Just as I was going through the gates I caught sight of the captain, who no sooner saw me than he gave chase, and in running from him I fell down; he coming up gave me a violent kick, got hold of me, and dragged me to the boat that he had just hauled in. I was taken on board. When the first mate saw me he began to laugh, and asked me the reason of my running away again; upon my not answering, he struck me several times with a rope's end. I then told him that I was afraid of the captain punishing me when he got me out at sea. He gave me a scornful look and said, aye, aye, my lad, you

think that the captain has forgiven you, but he will let you know whether he has or not. I began to cry. He went into a passion, got the chains that are used to fasten the coppers down to the deck, and wrapped them round my neck, body, and legs, which almost doubled me in two; he then forced me to creep along the deck, backwards and forwards, flogging me at the same time with a small piece of rathline. When he was tired of his cruelty, he asked me if I should like to go home with those chains round me. I spoke boldly to him, and said, 'yes, Sir, I wish I was going into my father and mother's presence now, they would make you pay dearly for this.' I was stopped from saying any more by a blow on the mouth, which caused it to bleed dreadfully; at the same time cursing me for my impertinence, and ordering me to sweep the deck. I strove to obey him, but from the weight of the chains, and the cruel treatment I had received, found it difficult to stand, he laughing and cursing me as he went below. After I had been two hours in punishment, he came and took the chains off me, saying, 'now, my lad, you must not expect the least chance of running away again, for I will keep a sharp look out while we remain here; you think that the captain has forgiven you, but you will find it out when you get to sea.'

The next morning I went upon deck to see if there was any chance of running away, when I perceived the first mate watching me. I pretended not to see him, and went to my hammock again, thinking to try to make my escape in the day time, as there was so much suspicion of my running away in the morning. I had not been long in my hammock before the first mate came and called, ordering me to rise and come upon deck. I obeyed him. He then told me he thought I was for running away; I told him that I did not intend to run away any more, as I had made up my mind to bear with my sufferings as well as I could until I got once more to England. After giving me a blow with his fist, he ordered

me to make a fire, and told me I must serve in the place of a cook. I managed to get breakfast over without much fault being found, after which he told me to boil some beef and make broth for the men's dinner, and to bake him a piece of beef in the oven. While I was busy with my cooking I kept a sharp look out after him, in order to make my escape the first opportunity. At last I thought there was a good chance, as I heard the first mate telling the men in the hold to make haste, and get the empty casks stowed before dinner; and the second mate answering him, saying, 'yes, if you will come and help us we will do so;' he said he would, and giving me strict orders to have the dinner ready by the time they had done.

Pretending to be cheerful, I made a bow, and went bustling round the deck 'like Satan in a gale of wind,' and no sooner saw the mate go below than I thought 'sink or swim' I will try again to make my escape, and was thinking of jumping overboard, and swim by an hawser that we had made fast on the Mole. I saw a man in a boat astern of the next vessel. I hailed him, shaking my fist, signifying to make as little noise as possible. He was soon alongside, and I having no money ran to the cabin, took out the beef which was for the mate's dinner, and gave it to the man in the boat, who gladly received it. I now jumped in, made my escape, and went to the English boarding-house, where I was welcomed, as I promised to pay when I got another ship. I left the house to stroll out for a short time, and on returning found that the captain, accompanied by some gentlemen, had been there, and offered ten dollars to the landlord if he would take me on board. He informed me he could keep me no longer, as the captain would be enquiring about me again. I told him I knew not where to go, dreading the result of being taken. I sought for shelter in French town, but was speedily stopped by an Italian, who collared me, saying the captain had been hunting me, and that I must go on board with him. I said

I would go with him willingly, if he would ask the captain to pardon me. The deceitful fellow tried to flatter me, by saying that the captain would not abuse me but be glad to see me. Pretending to believe him, I calmly asked him to loose me, and he did so. I pretended to go willingly, till we got opposite a provision shop; I then stopped, saying that I was hungry, and he no doubt thinking of the ten dollars he should get, let me go in, when watching an opportunity I darted out of the shop, and never looked behind me until I was convinced I was out of reach of my pursuer.

I then went through the city many miles into the country, without being interrupted by any person. At night I slept by the side of the road, and early in the morning was disturbed by a quantity of lizards, which frightened me very much, as at the time I did not know what they were, but have learned since. I revenged myself by killing some of them, and looking round which way to steer, and seeing a road across some grounds, I wandered about until night, when I came in sight of the city again. I then laid down until morning, and for four days and five nights continued wandering during the days, and at nights sleeping by the road side, having no other refreshment but water. On the fifth morning I felt very weak, with a violent pain at my stomach, and went to a brook to get some drink and wash myself. Going down the road I met a man driving a flock of sheep, and he spoke to me, but I pretended not to hear him, and kept going on. He then came up to me, and spoke in a very loud voice. I pointed to my ear, signifying that I was deaf, but he seemed not to be satisfied. I then pointed to my mouth and ears, signifying that I was both deaf and dumb, and kept walking on. He then went after his sheep, and was soon out of sight. I got to the brock, washed my face, and drank a little water, which made me sick, followed by a sharp pain in my stomach. When the pain abated, a deep thought struck me about my poor mother. I imagined that if she knew what I was

suffering, how she would grieve; but no, thought I, perhaps she may never see me again. I burst into a loud fit of crying, when I was suddenly started by a young woman standing on the bridge; who shouted to me. I was ashamed, wiped up my tears, looked round, and not understanding her, made no reply. She put up her hand, and beckoned me to come to her; I did so, when with motions and signs, and a little broken Italian which I had learned, gave her to understand that I had been four days and five nights without food, and that I was an English boy.

She was a kind soul, and gave me all the money (about the value of threepence in English money) she had in her pocket. I made her understand I could not eat that, and motioned that I dare not go to Leghorn, as my vessel was lying there, and if the captain caught me he would use me most unmercifully.

She understood my meaning, shed tears, and taking me by the hand, pointed me to a farm-house that was close by, shewing me by signs if I went there I should get plenty to eat and drink. I have reason to believe she was a servant belonging to a large house or castle which I saw at a distance, as she had three elegantly dressed children with her.

I went up to the house in question, knocked at the door, but was answered only by a dog barking inside. Thinking the house was unoccupied I was going off, when I heard a woman's voice, and on looking to find from whence the sound proceeded, I saw a small hut, and three women standing at the door; one of whom asked me, in Italian, what I wanted. I mentioned that I wanted something to eat; whereupon she brought me a piece of bread, which I had no sooner got into my hand than a dog came and stole it from me. The dog ran into the hut with it, and I followed him. The woman saved me from the dog who was going to fly at me, and she gave me a larger piece, which I put in my breast, and bent my way towards Leghorn.

After eating my bread, which I found rather increased than abated my hunger, I walked several

miles, and then thought I would venture towards the city; but being a great number of miles from it, I began to walk very fast, and in three or four hours got into the city again, where I once more sought the English boarding-house.

Here I was glad to learn from the landlord, who received me very kindly, that our vessel had just sailed, and that he should be able to find me another ship.

I am now, kind friends, about to enter on chapter the third, and doubt not you will agree with me in the prospects of my new undertaking, and serving another master.



CHAPTER III.

For dear happy England I sigh'd,
For my parents, home, and each friend,
But 'twas long 'ere my troubles were o'er,
Or my sorrows were brought to an end.

I engaged and entered on board an English ship that was lying quarantine, imagining I should see England and my dear parents once more; but to my disappointment when I went on board I was informed that she was bound for Alexandria in Egypt, which made me very low spirited; but finding the captain a kind master, I was proud to serve him. We put to sea about nine or ten days after I went on board, and had a favourable passage till we came near to Alexandria, then took a pilot on board and entered the harbour.

The appearance of the inhabitants attracted my attention, they being of a copper colour—and all Mahometans. On Sunday I went on shore to look at the city, as they call it, where every thing appeared strange to me. We discharged our cargo and took in another, put to sea, and returned again to Leghorn, trading from one port to another, and again to Alexandria, where we laid three or four months. During this time our captain thought it proper to go out on pleasure; accordingly he, and the captain and an agent of a transport that was lying there, agreed to take their long boats and a supply of provisions, and go up the Nile, that they might view Grand Cairo, and shoot wild fowl, which were very abundant in those parts. After staying

away a fortnight he returned, having had a very pleasant excursion.

I remember one time in particular the captain took a trip into the country on a shooting excursion. He had a guide and I with him, and on beating a bush something started up which I at first thought was a snake, but it had four legs. I called to the guide to know what it was, and he could not say what they called it in England, but telling the captain it was quite harmless, he caught it in his hands, and it proved to be a camelion,

“ A lizard’s body lean and long,
A fish’s head, a serpent’s tongue,
Its foot with triple claw disjoin’d,
And what a length of tail behind !”

Having first seen this singular creature, I took it with me on board, and claimed it as my own, but the captain wishing it himself, I readily gave it to him, as he had made me several presents, and given me some clothes, which I stood in need of.

The animal was about twenty inches long from the nose to the end of the tail, and what was surprising, we never saw it eat, although we observed it lie down with its mouth open, as if imbibing the dew.

There are many wiseacres who profess that the camelion changes colour when it likes, but I think I can explain their mistake. The coat of this animal is tinged with various colours, and when the light is shining upon it, it reflects to the beholder different hues.

Hence arose the disputes shown in the *Speaker* : one said it was blue, another green, and the umpire declared it was black, until the animal was produced, and at candle light was found to be a perfect white.

Finding that we wanted fresh water, the first mate and part of the crew, taking me with them, took the long boat and some empty water casks, and went in search of water. We went out many miles along the coast before we found any, at last we found plenty, but rather brackish. The mate having a

good fowling-piece, and plenty of shot and powder, took me with him and went in search of game, whilst the others got the water. He killed several fine birds. Just after he had shot a very large one, which fell upon the beach, and I running to pick it up, was suddenly surprised by a large wolf making its appearance from behind a small point of land, and on seeing me it made a stop, pricking up its ears, walking very fast towards me. I ran towards the mate, shouting to him, saying there was some kind of savage beast coming near us; when he saw it, he immediately loaded his gun, prepared to receive it, as it was running with open mouth towards him, and when it came within six or seven yards he fired right into its breast; it still ran towards him, when he gave it a severe blow on the head with the butt end of his piece, which laid it groaning on the ground. I was ordered to drag it to the boat, which was about two or three miles off. We put it into the boat, and took it on board. The next day the captain invited several of the natives to come and see it, who declared they never saw one so large. For curiosity the captain had it weighed, (but I forget the weight of it;) after which he ordered me to throw it overboard. I took the skin off it first, which made several caps for the ship's company.

Before we left Alexandria, the captain, with several other English captains, got leave of the Bashaw of Alexandria to visit Pompey's pillar, which is one of the greatest wonders of the world. We erected a tent at its base, and managed to get to the top of it by flying a kite over it, and dropping the string we were enabled to get two ropes over it, so as to form a kind of rigging, when with little difficulty we all got to the top. After we had drank a glass of grog each, we all came down except the captains, who stopped for some time amusing themselves by shooting pigeons. After spending the most of two nights and a day, we all returned to the vessel, when the carpenter and I got to quarrelling concerning carrying a load on board. I must acknowledge I began

the quarrel, by telling him he was as able to carry a heavy load as I, and he ought to do so, having men's wages, and myself little more than a boy's. He called me an impertinent puppy, and gave me a slap in the face. I returned it by giving him a severe blow on the throat, which felled him to the ground. When he got up the first mate asked him if he would stand that, upon which I said—if he does not like to stand it, he might lie down to it, and Sir, if you will allow me I will beat him. We then stripped and set to, when I gave him a severe beating. He was ashamed of himself, as he had always been bragging that he was a don fighter. The men laughed to see him turn out so great a coward. When the captain heard of it he enquired of the carpenter the reason of our fighting, who told him many false tales, which I thought a very poor way of revenge, and it caused great uneasiness in my mind.

As there was a ship bound for England wanting five hands, I took the opportunity (when our captain was on shore) of going to ask the captain if he would ship me. He asked me the reason of my wanting to leave the vessel I belonged to. I told him that I wished to return to England, and how many years I had been from home. He said he would ship me, but not without a regular discharge from my captain. I returned to the vessel, and in the evening told the captain of my wish. He at first refused and ordered me on deck, but soon rang the bell, and said he did not wish to part with me, and that he would increase my wages if I would stop with him. I still pressed him to give me my discharge, saying that I wanted to see my father and mother again if they were alive, as I was sure they would be very uneasy about me, being so long absent from them. His heart relented, and he gave me my discharge and an excellent character; he then paid me my wages and gave me a dollar extra, telling me to take care and put it in the other captain's hands till I got to England. The next day I took leave of the ship's company, and went on board the other vessel, which was called the Haven, of Bristol.

I agreed for able seaman's wages with my new captain, who I found to be a very good man and kind to the ship's company, and they were a very agreeable set of men. The Sunday following I asked the captain for leave to go on shore for a little pleasure, which was granted; but finding that none of the crew were going on shore till the next Sunday, (it being the last we expected to lie there,) I felt rather disappointed. Having prepared myself I was determined to go, and procuring one of the native's boats, I went on shore, rambled up and down the city, and bought a bottle of Madeira wine, and drunk it. I then hired an ass to ride, which is a common thing for sailors to do in that country. I ventured a little way out of the city, but soon returned for fear of the treachery of the natives. After giving up the ass I went intending to have more wine, but just on entering the house I was met by a man who spoke to me in French. I told him I was no Frenchman, and went on; he followed me, saying, you are an Englishman—me like Englishmen. Do you, says I? Yes, John, me like Englishmen better than my own country; and many other words passed between us as he walked by my side.

He asked me if I wanted to buy some good blue linen shirts, or any other wearing apparel; I said I would buy some shirts, if we could agree about the price. He asked me if I had a knife, which I thought rather a droll question; I said yes, but why ask such a question? Oh, nothing, only that I sell them—do you want to buy one, showing me a common pocket knife. I said I had one, and that was plenty for me. He asked me to let him see it; I told him it was on board, as I never carried it with me. I did not know what to make of him, as he enquired so particularly about my knife. Little did he know that I had a famous stab knife in a sheath under my waistcoat. He took me to his house to show me what sort of shirts he had to sell, and as soon as he got me in he locked the door, showed me two wet shirts which he took out of some water, and offered

me one for nothing as he pretended, but I soon found out that he was about no good, and intended some ill towards me. I put myself on my guard, seeming to be ignorant of every thing that I suspected. He shewed me a large stab knife; I asked him to let me have it in my own hand, but he refused, and said no, no, I never let another man take my stab knife in his hand. He then asked me a very indecent question, which I think proper not to mention. I was obliged to draw my knife, and in a moment pierced him in the side, and tried to make my escape, but finding the door locked, my heart trembled within me. On seeing the key in the door I unlocked it, and in my hurry to get out I fell down about thirty steps into the street, and cut my eyebrow very bad, so as to leave a mark for life. It was a great mercy that I did not kill myself, as I had my stab knife in my hand when I fell. I got up immediately, hid my knife, and made the best of my way to get a boat to take me on board.

On my way to the vessel I met our captain, who asked me what was amiss. I told him that I had stabbed a man. He said, say no more than follow me down to the boat; I did so, and we soon got on board of our ship. I then told the captain all the particulars of what the man had attempted to do at me. He said I had done right by so doing, at the same time cautioning me not to go on shore any more while we remained there. The next Sunday all the ship's company went on shore, except the captain, first mate, and myself. They were met by the man that I thought must have been dead, from the stab that I gave him. He enquired for me, and said he wished to see me. They told him I was on board, and that if he wanted me he knew where to find me. He said, oh! he only owes me a trifle of money; so they parted with him.

At night when they came on board they were all very tipsy, which vexed the captain very much. The fire in the cambouse had gone out, and the cook could neither find his tinder box or matches, and when he

saw that the captain was angry, he pulled off his jacket, and stamped two or three times upon deck with his feet, then looking steadfastly at the captain began to swear, and said never mind, Sir, I will have fire from some place if it comes from h—l. He then jumped overboard, and swam to a Greek ship that was lying by us, and ascended upon deck by a rope ladder that hung by the gangway. The men all gathered round him, saying something which he did not understand, and all in a bustle pointed to the fire; cried out fire, fire, fire, till he got close to it, then snatching a lighted piece of wood jumped overboard, and swam back to our ship with one hand, and the fire he held out of the water with the other. He got the kettle boiled for the captain, who could not help smiling, when he told how he got the light.

I dare say the men belonging the other vessel would be much surprised to see the cook act in such a curious manner. He was a powerful man, with surprising courage, and stood about six feet in height. He was one of the best of swimmers that ever I saw or heard of. A few days after this it came on very rough and squally weather. In one of the squalls it capsized a new English vessel, that had just prepared to take in her cargo: having nothing in her hold to balance her, and the main hatch being off, she filled with water and sunk. Some English vessels came to her assistance, to try to raise her, but all their labour was in vain. The captain of her sold her to the Great Bashaw, with the privilege of allowing him to take out of her what he could without injuring the vessel.

Our captain asked the black cook what he thought about her, as there was a deal of money in a desk in the cabin. The cook said—I will work this way: if I have no success, I shall expect no pay; but if I succeed, I shall expect to be well paid for my trouble. Very good, said the captain belonging to her. We all went (except two) to assist the cook, who drank about half a pint of rum; then stripped himself naked, and dived under the water, came up, bringing with him the skylight of the cabin. Now, says he, what

is the next thing for me to do, and what do you mean to give me if I succeed, as I understand there is something of great value in the cabin. Yes, there is, says the captain, and if you bring up the desk, I will give you twenty dollars. Very good, says the cook, and down he went into the cabin, where he remained so long, that we never expected to see him come up again; at the last he came up, bringing with him the desk upon his head, which was taken off him, and got into a boat. He said it was tight work with him, as it had shifted from where the captain told him it was; but never mind, it is safe, and give me another glass of grog. After drinking his grog, he asked the captain to pay him the twenty dollars; he replied, I will pay you ten, and the remainder when you have done all your work.

The black cook not liking this, told the captain he might go and fetch the rest himself, and said—you made your own bargain; twenty dollars for the first load, and ten for the second, and if you only had said five, I am sure I should have been satisfied; but if you are as honourable as your word, pay before I do any more.

The captain finding the cook inflexible, paid down the money, and asked him to go on with his work, but he refused, unless he put it in his own captain's hands; whereupon he did so, and the cook diving five times more requesting a quart of grog for each of the sailors. No sooner had they got a glass each filled, than they drank the cook's health, 'wishing him a long wind, and that he may never sink while there is grog afloat.'

This remarkable swimmer dived eighteen times, bringing up at each time valuable articles, and as he went off in our boats, many of the inhabitants joined us in horrid yells and shouts, cheering the black man.

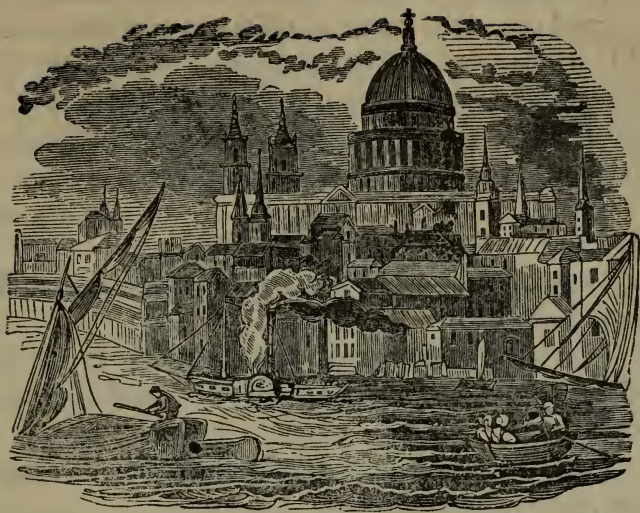
Soon after this we put to sea, bound for London, and in about four or five days, one of the men was taken ill with that afflicting disorder the plague, (the poor fellow was a foreigner,) and after struggling for five hours he expired; we soon threw him over-

board, fearing to catch the infection. In about an hour after, another man fell sick, who got better; the next day I fell sick, and compelled to lie in the long boat for three days; then got better and recovered my strength.

About two days sail from Gibraltar our ship was struck with lightning, which shivered the maintop in a dreadful manner; the carpenter and some of the men repaired it, and we run into Gibraltar, where we remained only a few hours, when we hove anchor again and put to sea. After a very rough passage we reached Stangate creek, below Sheerness, where we lay quarantine for fifty days, yet all of us in good health. I then for the first time for six years wrote to my poor father and mother, which much surprised them, having heard by a gentleman from Leghorn, who said he had been told by the English consul there that I was dead. My letter was answered by return of post; and when I had read my mother's letter, and found they were in comfortable circumstances, I went immediately to the captain and showed him it. When he had read it, he called me to him, and said, Bill, my lad, I perceive by this letter that you have good and kind-hearted parents; if it is agreeable to you I will answer this letter myself, and promise to see you safe on the coach, as your mother wishes you to leave London as soon as possible. I consented, and as early as it could be made convenient, the captain and the owner of the ship went with me to the Saracen's Head coach-office, and was soon at my parents fireside, where no one was more welcome.

As I promised my readers to acquaint them what became of the poor black cook that we left sick at Milford Haven, I will do so. One night I was relating to my parents and a few friends the dreadful dangers I had met with, and the cruelty of the captain during my time at sea, my poor mother, with tears in her eyes, told me she had heard that the cook was dead.

I have now, kind readers, come to the end of my tale, and I hope you will forgive any illiterate remarks herein, being but a very indifferent scholar.



SERIOUS THOUGHTS CONCERNING GODFATHERS AND GODMOTHERS.

I. In the ancient church, when baptism was administered, there were usually two or more *sponsors* (so Tertullian calls them, a hundred years after the death of St. John) for every person to be baptised. As there were *witnesses* before God and the Church, of the solemn engagement those persons then entered into so they *undertook* (as the very word implies) to watch over their souls in a peculiar manner, to instruct, admonish, exhort, and build them up in the faith once delivered to the saints. These were considered as a kind of spiritual parents to the baptized, whether they were infants or at man's estate; and were expected to supply whatever spiritual helps were wanting, either through the death or neglect of the natural parents.

II. These have been retained in the Christian church from the earliest times, as the reason for them was the

same in all ages. In our church they are termed by a proper and expressive name, *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*. And it is appointed, "That there shall be for every male child to be baptized, two Godfathers and one God-mother; and for every female one Godfather and two Godmothers."

III. But it is objected against these,

1. That there is no mention of Godfathers and Godmothers in Scripture.

2. That many undertake this, without ever considering what they undertake, or once seriously thinking how to perform it.

3. That no serious man would undertake it, because it is impossible to perform it.

IV. I answer, first, it is undoubtedly true, Godfathers and Godmothers are not mentioned in Scripture. And therefore it cannot be said they are absolutely necessary, or that Baptism cannot be administered without them; but yet it may be said they are highly expedient. For when they are prudently chosen, they may be of unspeakable use to the persons baptized, and a great relief and comfort to the parents of them.

V. I answer, secondly, it is too true, that many undertake this solemn office, without ever considering what they undertake; giddy, ignorant persons, (if not openly vicious) who never once seriously think how to perform it. But whose fault is this? It is not the fault of the church, which carefully guards against this very thing, by ordering, "That none but communicants be admitted to be Godfathers or Godmothers." Now communicants we may presume to be serious persons, who will both consider and perform what they undertake. It is altogether the fault of those foolish parents who will, on any ac-

count whatever, either desire or suffer those to be sponsors for their children, that do not take care of their own souls. It is these inconsiderate and cruel men, who have no compassion for their own flesh, that deprive their children of all the benefits of this wise institution, and bring a scandal on the institution itself by their wicked abuse of it.

VI. For, thirdly, there is no reason why any truly serious man should scruple to undertake the office. For if you suppose Godfathers and Godmothers undertake what is impossible to perform, you entirely mistake; and your mistake lies here: you think they undertake what they do not. Do not you think, the sponsors themselves undertake or promise, that the child shall “renounce the devil and all his works, constantly believe God’s holy word, and obediently keep his commandments?” Whereas, in truth, they neither undertake nor promise any such thing, when they answer, “I renounce them all: this I stedfastly believe: I will,” (obediently keep God’s holy will and commandments.) They promise nothing at all; they engage for nothing: it is another person that promises all this. Whatever is then promised or undertaken, it is not by them, but by the child. It is *his* part, not *theirs*: so the church tells you expressly; “This infant must, for *his* part, promise.” It is *he* promises in these words, not *they*. So again, “*This child* hath promised—to renounce the devil; to believe “in God, and to serve him.”

VII. What then is *your* part, who are sponsors for him? This likewise is expressly told you: “It is your part to “see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be “able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profes-
“sion, *he* hath here made by you. Ye shall call upon
“him to hear sermons, and shall provide that he may

“ learn the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul’s health ; and that this child may be virtuously brought up, to lead a godly and Christian life.”

VIII. Can any thing then be plainer, than what you do not, and what you do undertake ? You do not undertake, that he shall renounce the devil and serve God : this the baptized himself undertakes. You do undertake to see that he be taught what things a Christian ought to know and believe. And what is there in this, which is impossible—which any serious person may not perform ?

IX. If, then, you that are parents will be so wise and kind to your children, as to wave every other consideration, and to choose for their sponsors those persons alone who truly fear and serve God : If some of you, who love God, and love one another, agree to perform this office of love for each other’s children : and if all you who undertake it, perform it faithfully, with all the wisdom and power God hath given you : what a foundation of holiness and happiness may be laid, even to your latest posterity ! Then it may justly be hoped, that not only you and your house, but also the children which shall be born, shall serve the Lord.



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